



G·A·L·W·A·Y JOURNAL

PRESERVATION SOCIETY

~ GPS Update

~ Richard English

As summer began its graceful transition into autumn, we enjoyed a heartwarming program at our last meeting entitled “Galway School Days in the 1950s.” Four retired teachers who taught at Galway during that decade (Dusty Rhodes, Phyllis Keeler, Aileen Donnan, and Ed Gorga) reminisced about being hired, the subjects they taught, the extra-curricular activities they “volunteered” to supervise, the children they mentored, and the challenges they encountered. As professionals who could have chosen from a wide variety of careers, our panelists agreed that teaching was the best one possible despite the financial tradeoffs that such a choice entailed. Each speaker conveyed, in a touching way, the sentiment that “the kids made it all worthwhile.” At the end of the panel discussion, we enjoyed a poem written and read by Millie Stina which captured the spirit of the school from a student’s perspective. Many thanks to our panelists and participants for bringing to life an aspect of local history that had a profound impact on the character of our community.

Members are reminded that annual dues must be paid by October 15th to remain in good standing. Enclosed with the paper version of this newsletter is a Membership Renewal Form which can be mailed to GPS or brought to the October meeting with your dues of \$10 per household. Our mailing address is PO Box 276, Galway, NY 12074. An electronic version of the form can also be downloaded and printed from our website at <http://www.galwaypreservationsociety.org> and forms will be available at the front table during our next meeting.

Arlene Rhodes is seeking members who would like to assist the archives committee with two initiatives. The first is determining which of the Dave Bixby meeting videotapes should be converted to a more durable format. The second is capturing selected items from the Gertrude Jones diaries in a manner that will enable us to access the information by name or place. Please contact Arlene at 882-1297 or via e-mail at arrho@aol.com if you can help with either of these activities.

Our next member meeting will be Monday, October 3rd, with a program entitled “The Homestead: Saratoga County’s Tuberculosis Sanitarium.” The presenter will be Lauren Roberts, Saratoga County Historian, who will tell the story of how the sanitarium got its name and why it was built in such a “desolate” area. Our next board meeting will be Wednesday, October 12th, at Town Hall starting at 7:00 pm. All members are welcome to attend. If you cannot attend but would like the board to address an issue or consider an item of business, please contact an officer or trustee prior to the meeting.

Upcoming Dates

Oct 3 – Next Member Meeting at Town Hall

7:00 pm Social Gathering
7:30 pm Business Meeting
7:45 pm Program

Oct 12 – Next Board Meeting at Town Hall

7:00 pm

Contact us at galwaypressociety@gmail.com or visit us at <http://www.galwaypreservationsociety.org>

Please get in touch if you have an article to submit or an idea for an article: mcuffeperez@gmail.com or call 944-5843. We reserve the right to edit submissions, with the author's approval.

~ Announcements

Poems from *Story Quilt: Poems of a Place* will be performed by the Galway Players on Saturday, October 22 at 7:00 pm at the Galway High School Auditorium. The poems gathered from the community and written by the community present a personal view of life in Galway past and present. GPS was a key contributor to and supporter of this project and many of the poems come from our members. Join your neighbors for a very special evening of laughter, sharing and warm remembrances.

The Saratoga County Board of Supervisors and County Historian, Lauren Roberts, announce a new series this fall entitled "Hungry for History" which tells the stories behind three well-known local restaurants. The events begin with a History Happy Hour from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm followed by a presentation on the history of each restaurant and dinner (at a reduced rate) at 6:30 pm. The restaurants to be featured in the series are: The Wishing Well, 745 Saratoga Road, Wilton on September 29; The Cock 'n Bull, 5342 Parkis Mills Road, Galway on October 13; and Charlton Tavern, 745 Charlton Road, Charlton on October 27. For more information, contact the County Historian at 884-4749.

Correction to last month's recipe for Bublanina that accompanied the article on Christine Donnan: the recipe takes 1 cup sugar in total, ½ cup creamed with butter and ½ cup added to the egg whites.

Galway is rich in apple orchards, from the hybrids to the heritage. The last bedraggled remains of the oldest orchards can still be found -- even in forest land that was once cleared farmsteads. It has been one of my delights to discover these old orchards and to make a pie from the apples. It's always rewarding. The piece below was previously published in *Blueline* in 2003.

~ How to Make Abandoned Orchard Apple Pie

~ Mary Cuffe Perez

First, seek the apples.

Choose a day in early October. The air must be bright. When you take a deep breath, it will lift you a little off your feet. The sky, of course, must be utterly blue.

You will need a knapsack.

Go where farms had been but are no more, and haven't been for over fifty years. Abandoned orchards have the apples you are seeking. They are small orchards, of 20 trees or fewer, and they will be found not far from where a farm house stood.

This will take some searching. Second stage forests have overrun these orchards along with the fields of buckwheat, barley and corn, the house, barn and outbuildings. To find where these farms had been, it may be necessary to ask a person old enough to remember. They will tell you where the farms stood and whether or not they had orchards. Casting back a little further, they will direct you to the roads, ghost roads now, that led from farm to mill to town and between farms. Follow these.

Some of you may have already turned back, thinking it all sounds like too much bother for a pie. But for you who continue with me, there will be rewards. No pie you've ever tasted will be as good as an abandoned orchard apple pie.

Don't let yourself be too easily discouraged. There will be times when you will not be able to imagine a farm on the ghost road you are following. But keep the faith. Soon you will come to stone walls that once traced the outline of fields. Some will still hold fence posts of Black Locusts. Walk along these until you come to a row of Sugar Maples. These maples will stand out from the second stage forest like giants among children. They will be older than 100 years. Once they wore a girth of sap buckets in the spring. Now they stand like veterans of a war. They will be broken and hollowed out, twisted and ruptured. But, amazingly, there will still be life in them. You are close now.

Perhaps there will be an opening in a stone wall leading to a slight depression in the forest floor. Maybe there will be the stones of a foundation. Maybe only a whisper. Something will tell you. A house was here. Look around, maybe 100 yards from the house. There the orchard will be.

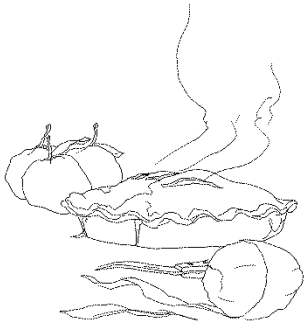
Don't expect the trees to look like apple trees you are used to seeing. First, they will be as tall as 60 feet. They are enormously theatrical. Their branches will gesticulate in all directions, some descending to the ground as if inviting you to climb. But unpruned all these years, they will be thorny and ingrown, their branches tangled in fox grape and bittersweet.

The apples will cluster at the tips of branches. They will appear larger than they are, a dusky vermilion against the sky. You will be amazed that these trees, so besieged by the forest, still offer apples. As long as they have the itch of life in them, they will bear fruit. I remember a tree that was completely uprooted still extending fruit on the tips of its branches.

To have these apples you must climb the trees, pushing through the thorny twigs and vines. Inch your way out just far enough on a branch bearing fruit to get a good grasp of it. Shake hard. This, of course, can be tricky but it is a very important part of the recipe. The tree will not give up its apples easily. The tree must be sure you really want them.

If you shake hard enough, the apples will rain down on the earth with little thuds like the hooves of a passing herd. When you climb down through the vines and branches to collect them you will think they have vanished. Don't worry, they are there. Again, they require that you look for them. They do not give themselves easily, as I said. When you collect them, you will see they are not at all like they appeared at the end of the branch. They are turned in on themselves, mottled with blemishes and a little grotesque. But the red will strike your heart like the wind-burned cheeks of children. You will love them for this and put them in your knapsack.

I find my pie apples in an orchard of an abandoned farm a few miles from my house. The roof of the house is caving in and the porch collapsing, but each spring a welcoming of daffodils and Hedge Roses still bloom along the walk to the front door. There is a pond beside it, ringed with willows and wild irises. Occasionally, I surprise a Great Blue Heron from its station there. The front of the house has the look of an old person gaping across the fields. Fields that are now forest. Behind it is the orchard. You enter it by a little path that was once so foot-worn, the depression remains. The path leads through the cathedral of the orchard out again to the brightness of high grasses, which fifty years ago were fields of buckwheat. The inheritor of this house manages to keep the fields mown to hold the forest back.



Drawing by Ralph Caparulo from Story Quilt: Poems of a Place, used with permission of the Galway Public Library.

The effect of viewing the golden field on the other side of the orchard is spiritual. Entering the orchard, I look up where the branches of the trees meet, allowing only shards of skylight to fall through. Birds pass silently from branch to branch, witnessing me. I tread carefully. The apples will have rained down already, the air fizzing with their cider. The buzzing of bees seems to be the conversation of the trees. There are many of the old varieties of apple trees here -- Baldwins, Northern Spy, Hubbardsons, Alexanders, even a Blue Pearmain. Some of the trees I climb, for their branches seem made for this. Mostly, I collect the apples from the ground, turning them over to choose the soundest.

When I have selected enough apples from the orchard, I go to the two trees beside the house, one a McIntosh, the other a Golden Russet. I collect a few apples here, but mostly I stand and look into the darkness behind the window and see the woman who lived here. The woman who canned and baked and preserved these apples. The woman who came with her baskets and ladder and gathered apples while her husband and sons worked the fields. This was her place, this orchard. I imagine her handing an apple down to me from her ladder.

And I see all the climbers of apple trees of my youth. I see my younger sister here, who I lost last summer. I hand her an apple.

Then I go home to make the pie.

Here's the rest of the recipe.

Take the apples out of your knapsack and investigate them. Taste them. Taste everything that has happened to them. Some will make your jaws ache with tartness; others will waft perfume and sweetness. Peel them carefully because they are small and you don't want to waste the flesh. You will have to pare them down anyway for these are apples of untended orchards, with insect burrows and blemishes. Some apples you will cut thin, some thick, depending on their densities. You'll need about four cups for a 9-inch pie. One cup of sugar, depending on how many tart and how many sweet, and a dash of cinnamon. This recipe requires judgment. Pile the apples in the crust. (Note: don't use one of those pre-made crusts. Make one yourself. These apples demand it.)

Dot the apples with butter before putting on the top crust. Cut a little cross in the center and place the pie into the pre-heated oven. 350 degrees for about 40 minutes should do it.

While the pie is baking, smell the apples, smell the stories they are telling, the days and nights of getting there, how brave they are. How far they've come.

Finally, take the pie out of the oven when it is golden brown and the juice is bubbling amber through the crust. Listen to the hiss and whisper of rendered apples. Marvel. Know life is good. Then, the pie is ready.

And here's another delicious recipe from Sue Surdyka for Crunch Applesauce Bars which, if you were fortunate enough to attend the September GPS membership meeting, you have already sampled.

Crunchy Applesauce Bars - from the recipe box of Sue Surdyka

Bars:

1 cup sugar (can use ½ brown and ½ granulated)	¼ tsp. ground cloves
½ cup shortening or Oleo	½ tsp. salt
1 cup applesauce	2 cups of flour
1 tsp. vanilla	1 cup of raisins (optional)
1 tsp. baking soda	1 cup of chopped walnuts (optional)
1 tsp. cinnamon	3 eggs
1 tsp. nutmeg	

Cream together shortening and sugar. Add applesauce, vanilla and eggs and mix. Then mix together flour and dry ingredients. Add to wet mixture. Spread into 9x13 pan.

Topping:

½ cup crushed cornflakes	¼ cup granulated sugar
½ cup chopped walnuts	2 tbsp. melted butter or Oleo

Mix together all ingredients. Spread over batter. Bake at 350 degrees for about 20 minutes or until done. Cool and cut into bars.

✶ Blast from the Past

The following is an excerpt of a news item that appeared in the 1936 Saratogian:

Galway - At the commencement exercises of Galway High School held in the Presbyterian Church on Monday, 14 young people received diplomas. The graduates are: Norman Barrett, Doris Carr, Everett Carr, Ernest Denison, Muriel Graves, Duane McChesney, Shirley McChesney, Virginia Murtlow, Hazel Oakes, Frederic Oakes, Harold Overend, Eunice Post, Rachael Scripter and Jessie Springer.

--from the scrap book of Agnes Donnan lent to GPS by Christine Donnan

~ Stimson Cemetery

~ Historical Marker Profile #5

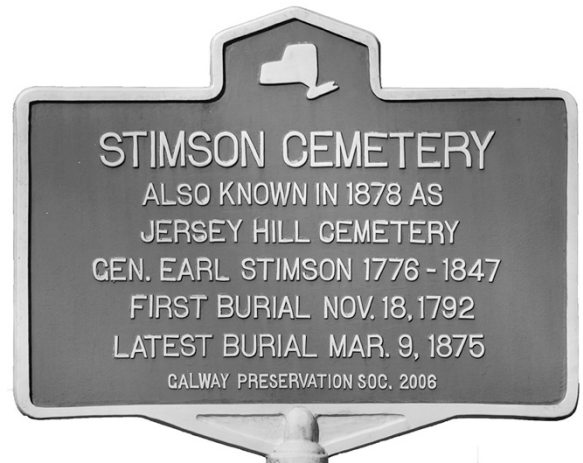
Galway is home to eight New York State Historical Markers. One of these markers commemorates the resting place of a figure who played a significant role in the early history of the town.

The Stimson Cemetery, with 106 stones, was originally called Jersey Hill Cemetery. The first burial took place in 1792. When General Earl Stimson was buried here in 1847, it was still referred to as Jersey Hill Cemetery and would continue to be known by that name as late as 1878. Only later was the cemetery renamed to acknowledge its most notable occupant.

Earl Stimson was a businessman, a farmer, and served in the State Militia, being promoted to Paymaster, Captain, and later Major General. He operated the best-managed farm in the area as well as a hotel, boarding house, meatpacking plant, and several stores. It would be fair to say that Stimson was one of the town's leading citizens of his day.

The historical marker is located on the east side of Consaul Road, a short distance south of Cummings Corners (where Consaul Road intersects with West Galway Road).

Thanks to Phyllis Keeler and Tom Cwiakala who published a detailed write-up of this historical marker in the Fall 2011 issue of the Galway Reader.



Galway Preservation Society

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